

Notes from 2/4/2020 Outreach Team Meeting

Icebreaker

Eliza Monroe (staff)

Why were you initially interested in being a part of the Outreach Team? What brought you back tonight?

- Folks want to know - What are the most common things that have been shared/heard from the community? From Ambassadors sessions – gentrification and housing.
- Some folks thought this group would be writing the plan

Updates

Laura Marie Davis (Outreach Team member):

- Provided a summary of the listening and learning phase of engagement that included the workshops in November, the online survey from November to January, and the Engagement Ambassadors work from December to February (details are included in the updates shared via email to the Outreach Team on 1/30 and 2/3)
- Provided participation summaries from the workshops (375 participants) and the online survey (200 participants)

Lisa Miller (staff), Vanessa Mason-Evans, Ashley Robbins, Alexandra Valledares (Engagement Ambassadors):

- Staff gave an update on the Engagement Ambassador program and explained the role of the Ambassadors
- Vanessa, Ashley, and Alexandra talked about their work as engagement ambassadors; talked about the school, church, and other groups they are reaching and some of what they have heard:
 - Heard many black people don't see the same Durham they used to
 - Heard folks would like to see more black spaces reflected in Durham
 - Talked about displacement
 - Talked about affording land and the taking of land
 - The history of Durham is rich
 - Gentrification and housing are the main issues coming up in these sessions
 - People who work in Durham can't afford to live here
 - Growing homeless population
 - People want to be engaged but they feel like their voice isn't heard and there are too many barriers
 - A lot of robust feedback from the community saying they want to be involved and want to be heard
 - Noted that the open ended questions take warming up, talking about more immediate concerns first before thinking about their ideal Durham
 - There's a desire for a sense of care and belonging
 - Hosting sessions and having others watch to build trust and capacity for others to move into this role in the future
 - Bringing in DPS parents

- We can't keep hearing from the same people that we have in the past (that don't represent all of Durham) or we will get the same results

Sara Young (staff)

- Explained that the consultant is no longer on the project
 - Staff has learned a lot from working with the consultant and the community so far
 - The Equitable Community Engagement Blueprint was being written when we started the project so we didn't have a clear understanding of what it would take (time and money) to do equitable engagement
 - Staff quickly learned the consultant's standard contract scope would not be sufficient
 - We decided to end contract in order to focus our efforts on the blueprint implementation, including spending money locally
 - Discussed partnerships with staff in Neighborhood Improvement Services on Ambassadors' management and Office of Performance and Innovation on engagement design and data analysis

Q&A and Responses to information shared

Staff and Ambassadors answering questions from the group

- When you give a title to something, you have to recognize the impact of it – we should have engaged the community before calling this effort ENGAGEDurham
- Impressed the engagement ambassadors have reached more people (over 400 so far) than the Listening & Learning sessions
- Thought we were using the same consultant as Minneapolis
- How does the Comprehensive Plan relate to the Transit Plan?
 - The transit plan has two timelines
 - The short term timeline will be an update for work that will start in 2021 – to move up projects like bus stop improvements, route frequencies that are now possible because the light rail project isn't taking up most of the transit tax funds
 - The longer term timeline will track with the Comprehensive plan – this work will make sure transportation options (including transit) will serve the areas where future development will be – when the Comprehensive Plan is adopted (April 2022) staff will update the Transit Plan to reflect the transit policies in the Comprehensive Plan
- How is the Transit Plan getting input from the public?
 - Wherever possible, the Comprehensive Plan and Transit Plan engagement will happen together
 - Where the transit plan engagement needs don't line up with the timing of engagement for the Comprehensive Plan, the Transit Plan engagement is also working towards the Equitable Community Engagement Blueprint.
- Can you explain the difference between light-rail and commuter rail?
 - Commuter rail cars are rated similar in size and weight to freight train cars

- Is there a difference between the outreach team and the engagement ambassadors?
 - The Outreach Team is focused on helping figure out how to do equitable engagement and sharing information and invitations to participate with their networks
 - The Engagement Ambassadors (currently) are holding input sessions specifically with people in the community that were not part of the workshops, folks who may have been unable or uncomfortable participating in a meeting outside of their community. The Ambassadors receive a stipend for their work. The exact form of the Ambassadors' work in the future may change with feedback from the community and the Ambassadors.
- Who will take over the consultant work?
 - We have identified staff resources within the Planning department, the Neighborhood Improvement Services department, and the Office of Performance and Innovation within the Budget and Management Services department to fill the roles that the consultant previously had.
- Do we have information from the Listening & Learning Sessions yet? Some folks thought they were receiving that information tonight
 - Staff is currently working on data entry, organizing and theming of all of the input from the Ambassadors, the workshops, and the survey to get this information in a form that can be easily shared back with the community in the next engagement round (April/May)
- Are there overarching goals for the Comp Plan now?
 - There are not existing adopted goals for the new comprehensive plan. The next phase of engagement will result in community goals for adoption from the community input.
 - There is an overarching goal that equitable community engagement will be a significant tool for plan development – ensuring that community input shapes the plan and that we hear from communities that have historically been not listened to or overlooked when developing these plans.
- There's a difference between the information that the Engagement Ambassadors and Outreach Team are hearing – the Ambassadors are hearing input as they are facilitating input sessions so understand what the community is saying already
- It was suggested that Outreach Team members and Ambassadors work together in pairs or that the groups work together more closely
- It was suggested that the Outreach Team could bring the concerns of the community to the people making decisions (elected officials, boards and commissions) and to developers who will be building in Durham
- Some folks shared that they want to see more progress, with all the months that have passed, they haven't seen progress
 - Request to share who is involved, with what, in what way
 - Lisa will share a visual representation of all the groups involved
 - Instead of talking about what ifs, talk about all the things we have done and who we are working with to date

- How can the Comp Plan influence public housing?
 - What opportunities are there to support the McDougald residents? Seems like concerns always get pushed off to other departments and not getting done
 - There are two ways staff sees opportunities:
 - Staff is committed to sharing the input heard from the community to departments, organizations, and elected officials that make decisions about those concerns – like the state of our public housing
 - The plan can specifically look at what development in and around our public housing communities will be in the future and can reinforce the goal of safe and accessible housing as a baseline for all its residents.
- What are the Comprehensive Plan things that you can actually do?
 - We are starting with broad discussion and engagement in this project because we don't often have a big project, looking at the whole County, and determining the community's vision for Durham.
 - As the project continues it will get more specific. The Comprehensive Plan has the most opportunity to directly influence what private development looks like as it is built.
- What percent of the population are we trying to reach, what's our threshold?
 - Concerns about statistical significance and concerns about representation
 - No specific number has been set. Staff expects that as this three-year process continues that people will join in and we will need to provide opportunities and information for folks to understand what work on the project has happened so far. We are working on reaching more people, and are focused on reaching folks who we haven't tried to reach in the past. We know that people in Durham who have greater privilege will be able to access our engagement even if it isn't designed like typical government meetings have been in the past.
- What are we planning?
 - How does this feedback relate to the Comprehensive Plan?
 - The community goals for the Comprehensive Plan could be seen as a long-term strategic plan for our community. The comprehensive plan will address how the City and County manage growth and change of things that are built in the community but the goals could address community vision for broader impacts in addition.
- Commuter Rail Meeting Information Shared - Open House information on the proposed Commuter Rail project. February 22 from 9am to 11am (drop in style) at the Durham County Health and Human Services Building (414 E. Main St) More information can be found here: <https://gotriangle.org/commuter-rail>

Question to the group:

In what ways do folks want to be involved? Not everyone has to be involved in the same way.

- Work more closely between the Outreach Team and Engagement Ambassadors
- Go before elected officials/developers and hold accountable

- Individuals wrote down and provided to staff what they want to contribute to the Outreach Team or what they want to see the group doing
- the group discussed possible creating working groups around specific ways to be involved

Staff is putting together this information to share back out to the Team and share contact information between members to work together

